

**Town of Merrillville  
Town Council Minutes (Amended)  
Municipal Complex  
August 25, 2020  
6:30 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER:** President Bella called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

**INVOCATION:** Invocation was given by Impact Pastor.

**MOMENT OF SILENCE:**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Police Commissioner Gene Ward.

**ROLL CALL:** Roll Call taken by Madam Clerk-Treasurer White Gibson, Present were Councilman Spann, Councilman Hardaway, Councilman Minchuk, Councilwoman Uzelac, Councilman Pettit, Vice President White, and President Bella. All seven (7) Council members were present.

**PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND  
REMONSTRATIONS**

Swearing in of 4 new Merrillville Police Officers  
Kwata D. Osborne  
Devante M. Bradley  
Ian Davidson-Dugan  
Joshua M. Galle

Chief Cuttino welcomes the 4 Police Officers and their families to the Merrillville Police Department. Officer's names and badge numbers were announced by Chief Cuttino.

Officer Kwata D. Osborne – Badge 411  
Officer Devante M. Bradley – Badge 412  
Officer Ian Davidson-Dugan – Badge 413  
Officer Joshua M. Galle – Badge 414

Police Officers were sworn in by Madam Clerk-Treasurer, Kelly White Gibson.

Letter from Town Engineering Administrator, Steve King endorsing Core Construction's recommendation to approve payment for Application #8 in the amount of \$1,960,253.12 to various vendors for work completed at the Merrillville Community Center. Motion by Councilman Pettit, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac. Voice Vote 7-0. Motion carries.

President Bella provided Safe Haven Baby Box updates to the Council Members and to the general public. The Safe Haven Baby Box is located at the Fire Department on 73<sup>rd</sup> Ave. Operation should begin within the next few weeks. President Bella thanked the companies that have donated.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Accts. Payable Register Voucher Approval for August 25, 2020

Approval of (Amended) Town Council Meeting Minutes of August 11, 2020

Motion by Councilman Pettit, seconded by Vice President White. Voice vote 7-0. Motion carries

**STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**BUDGET & FINANCE- WHITE-**

Vice President White stated that the department budgets are in order. He suggests that Phase 2 begins and that the Council Members conduct their overview. The overview will help to ensure that the Town is being run properly.

President Bella announced a Town Workshop Meeting scheduled for next Monday, August 31, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.

**COUNCIL AFFAIRS- UZELAC-**

No report. A meeting will be scheduled soon.

**PUBLIC WORKS-MINCHUK** – No report. A workshop will be scheduled for late September.

**ELECTIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS, & CENSUS 2020- PETTIT**

Councilman Pettit states that a ZOOM meeting is scheduled tomorrow, August 26, 2020 with Nicholas Elliott. This is in an effort to help raise the 2020 Census numbers. He continues to encourage the citizens of Merrillville to go online to complete the Census. Census workers will conduct door to door visits in month of September and October.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS- WHITE-**

Vice President White spoke with Deputy Chief Nuses regarding possible mold in the Police Department. He asked Town Manager, Pat Reardon to address Deputy Chief's mold concerns. Vice President White hopes to schedule a visit to the Compost Facility in the next week so that he can update the general public.

**PERSONNEL POLICY & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS- UZELAC**

Councilwoman Uzelac stated that a meeting was held last week and two Police Commissioners were selected. Both persons were recommended by the FOP.

Pete Dragojevic – Democrat who will serve a 3 year term.

William Poling – Republican who will serve a 2 year term.

Vice President White stated that he doesn't believe the selection process was conducted fairly. He did not interview either candidate.

President Bella states that the council will take Vice President Whites comments under advisement. However, he advises Vice President White that the Police Commission is a political appointment and normally the applicant isn't interviewed by the Council Members. The FOP made the two recommendations and after reviewing their resumes the two were selected. Motion by Councilwoman Uzelac, seconded by Councilman Minchuk. Roll call vote 5-2.

Vice President White & Councilman Hardaway opposed. Motion carries.

**PUBLIC SAFETY- MINCHUK**

Councilman Minchuk congratulates those that have helped with the selection process for the new Police Officers and Commissioners. Workshops are scheduled for Thursday August 27<sup>th</sup> and Friday August 28<sup>th</sup>.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT- PETTIT**

A Redevelopment Commission Meeting will be held following tonight's Town Council Meeting.

**PARKS & RECREATION- UZELAC**

Crescent Lake Park (Ward 4) is near completion. Bids for Curtis Park (Ward 6) will begin in October.

**UTILITY LIAISONS- SPANN**

No Report

**ABANDONED PROPERTIES- WHITE**

Vice President White states that there's a house located at 60<sup>th</sup> Place on Cleveland Street that is covered with debris and overgrown bushes. He states that Mrs. Bunnell of Code Enforcement has been in contact with the property owner and debris removal is in process. Also, there's a house on Cleveland Street that roof has been covered with a tarp, this too is being addressed. Vice President White thanked Mrs. Bunnell and the Code Enforcement Department.

**TOWN IDENTIFY & BEAUTIFICATION- UZELAC**

Councilwoman Uzelac stated that a meeting hasn't taken place. However, ideas have been discussed on beautifying Merrillville with some plans to begin on Broadway.

**COMMUNITY & RECREATION CENTER- MINCHUK & PETTIT**

Councilman Pettit stated that he toured the Community Center and the place looks fantastic! Councilman Pettit thanked Core Construction for a job well done. The glass is being installed and the parking lot is being paved. A Committee Meeting was held with the discussion on moving the agreement with Merrillville Pop Warner, the Athletic Field and Merrillville Soccer. Steve King and Andrew Farmer presented drawings on the concession stand building. Core Construction anticipates completing the project by February 2021. A tentative grand opening is scheduled for March 1, 2021.

**Department & Commission Reports**

**Lake County Solid Waste Management-WHITE**

Vice President White states that the Lake County Solid Waste meets every two months. He would like the Town to conduct an Outreach Program to advise the citizens on the importance of recycling. Vice President White encourages the citizens to recycle.

**Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission- HARDAWAY**

No Report. A meeting is scheduled for next month.

**Stormwater Management Resources – LAKE**

Bids will be accepted beginning Tuesday, September 1, 2020 for the Meadowdale Regional Storm Water Project.

**Department Reports – Department Directors**

Mrs. Shine of Planning and Building encourages the residents to hire only licensed and bonded contractors for homes repairs. Also, to be sure that the contractors are pulling permits. This is for the safety of the Town and the residents.

Steve King, Town Engineer provided updates on the project at 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. The Town is currently resurfacing the sections between Taft Street & Broadway. This project should be completed Thursday August 27<sup>th</sup>. The Town will then begin the resurfacing between Broadway & Mississippi Street. Two additional decorative islands will be added between Broadway & I-65. Illuminated signs will be added at the intersection of Merrillville Road & 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue also at Mississippi & 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.

#### **General Orders**

#### **ORDINANCES**

##### **First Readings:**

##### **Ordinance 20-11, Discussion and Roll Call Vote**

An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, appropriating additional monies within the Merrillville Fire Territory Operating Fund of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, for the year 2020 included in the current budget. The amount is \$25,000.00 for building ground and repairs. Motion by Councilman Pettit, seconded by Councilman Spann. Roll call vote 7-0. Motion carries.

##### **Resolution 20-11, Discussion and Voice Vote**

A Resolution of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, transferring Monies of the 2020 Budget within the General Fund. This is a \$25,000 decrease in general parks and maintenance. Also a \$25,000 increase for general education and instruction and \$15,000 for attorney fees. Motion to table and rework resolution 20-11 by Councilman Hardaway, seconded by Councilman Pettit. Roll call vote 5-2. Vice President White and Councilman Spann opposed. Motion carries.

##### **BZA ACTIONS:**

None

**OLD BUSINESS** – Vice President White states the poor conditions of the old EMS/North Barn building on 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue near the Pruzin Community Center. He indicates that the roof is beginning to cave in. Vice President White would like to entertain a Motion to hire Ryan Construction, Inc. to conduct work at the old EMS/North Barn building in the amount of \$14,600. Work will include demolition and inspection for mold and asbestos. Motion by Vice President White, seconded by Councilman Spann. Voice vote 7-0. Motion carries.

##### **NEW BUSINESS:**

None

##### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

##### **Anthony Green**

Precinct Committeeman for Precinct 18 (15 years)

Mr. Green congratulates the newly elected Town Council President and Clerk-Treasurer. He states the pond's poor condition near Hickory Ridge Apartment Complex (West of his back yard). There has been mold growing in this area for years. Mr. Green and his neighbors have been promised help from the Town for the last 10 years, but hasn't yet received any. He has spent over \$42,000.00 in repairs due to the mold growing on his home. Mr. Green states that he has been in contact with Vice President White; Mr. Gene Ward and Public Works. He is requesting help from the Town.

Vice President White confirms that Mr. Green has been in contact with him and that he agrees that the pond near Mr. Green's home needs some attention. Vice President White asked Matt Lake of Stormwater to look into this matter.

Also, Mr. Green stated that he serves as the Treasurer for the Democratic Precinct Organization. He along with other precinct persons received a letter from John Petalas that he was resigning as Chair of the organization. Mr. Green would like to know if Councilwoman Uzelac will serve as the new Chair.

Councilwoman Uzelac advised Mr. Green that a meeting will be scheduled within the next couple of weeks. The organization is currently accepting applications for a new Chairman. Applications should be turned in to Mr. Weiser, County Chairman.

##### **Friends of Stephen Park**

##### **Bonita Maclin & Charles Maclin**

834 W. 70<sup>th</sup> Place  
Merrillville, IN 46410

##### **Jennifer McLucas**

7000 Tyler Court  
Merrillville, IN 46410

Mr. & Mrs. Maclin state that due to the recent Park shooting the residents does not feel safe. They indicate that the Park is lacking light and they would like help from the Town Council, Police Chief, Public Works and the Parks Department. Mrs. Maclin is requesting a sit down that would include the departments stated above.


**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The next Town Council Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn by Councilman Hardaway, seconded by Councilwoman Uzelac. Motion carries. Meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.

  
Rick Bella, President

  
Kelly White Gibson, Clerk -Treasurer